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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes two joint sessions held by the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to hear testimony on issues related to Native American adult and vocational technical education. Issues and problems are: (1) the positive effects of adult education on American Indians and their children, Indian adults' learning patterns, lack of tribal control on adult education, and the shortage of funding; (2) the need for vocational education to link training directly to the realities of the labor market, the relationship between vocational education and economic development, the federal role in Indian vocational education, lack of equity among tribes in vocational funding received, alternatives to the current instructor certification, and funding problems in adult education; and (3) the need for technical assistance and more funding for vocational rehabilitation programs. Community-based vocational education efforts are described. (SV)

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*INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
October 16, 1990*

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"Adult and Vocational Technical Education"

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INAR/NACIE Issue Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
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Summary: "Adult and Vocational Technical Education"

The first issue session on adult and vocational technical education was hosted by INAR Task Force member Ivan Sidney and NACIE Council Executive Director Jo Jo Hunt. The second session on these issues was hosted by INAR Task Force member Joseph Ely and NACIE Council member Buck Martin. The following issues, concerns, and recommendations were discussed during the sessions.

I. Adult Education

Recognizing the Need and Positive Effects

- Because Indian education has failed so much in the last generation, many adult individuals need to go back to school to become literate or trained for a vocation or trade, or to be able to function enough to go on to higher education.
- Adult education affects everything. It affects early childhood education because parents are the first teachers. It affects elementary and secondary education because it places parents in a position to encourage their children. It affects the family in general.
- I was involved in one model project when basic skills money used to be available through the U.S. Department of Education. This was before it disappeared into that vast hole called state revenue sharing. We had children who were coming to adult education classes with their parents, and they received tutorial help with their homework. The school principals wondered what was happening to these students because they really started taking off and doing great work. Parents whose children see them as active learners become forceful role models. Children become motivated because they do not just hear their parents talk, they actually see them learn. I think some of the most effective changes in children come about when they see their parents as active learners.
- Language is the key to every kind of participation, whether it is in tribal government or the local school district. I don't think that it is any accident that the Cherokee Nation is experiencing an upsurge in parental involvement in Head Start and by JOM and bilingual education parent committees. Parents are going out and demanding their rights to participate in the school system because we have had a very, very strong adult education program for a long time. If I look back at Mississippi Choctaw, I see that some of those people who came up through that system are now school board members, parent committee chairpersons, tribal council members, judges, and in a number of other leadership positions. Adult education does have an effect on parental participation. First, it produces leadership. Second, people simply become more articulate. They have more knowledge to provide advocacy for their children and for other people's children.

We would like to see very serious attention paid to the models of Indian adult education as it affects elementary and secondary education. We take 16-, 17-, and 18-year-old dropouts who have been labeled as troublemakers by court officials, and they are no trouble when they come to us. And if they can gain three to five grade levels in one year in adult education instruction, then this is a really good model that somebody ought to be paying attention to. We ought to be looking at what we know about teaching adults and high school students because it works. Those models need to be promulgated and disseminated.

How Indian Adults Learn

National research has been conducted to determine how and under what conditions Indian adults learn. Unfortunately, that piece of research is still sitting within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and has never been released or disseminated. However, we do know that Indian people learn best with Indian teachers and in Indian settings. The research was conducted by National Indian Management, Inc., under the supervision of two principal investigators, Rodney L. Brod and John M. McQuiston. The research was conducted 11 years ago, and the report was completed two years after that, but it was never officially released by ED. Nonetheless, there have been articles published on that research by the principal investigators.

We know from this research that Indian people do not participate in mixed programs with other minority groups, that they participate in their home communities with Indian teachers and in projects that are sponsored by tribes. We also know from the research, from the experience of Indian adult education programs, and from the experience of tribes that do not have programs that the Federal Adult Education Act does not serve Indian adults. There are very few instances in which grants have been or are being made to Indian organizations or institutions. Even if those monies were to become available, they carry too much red-tape and too many built-in limitations to meet the needs of Indian adults. For example, some grants have prohibitions against supportive services such as transportation and child care. In Oregon, only community colleges can offer adult education services with Federal Adult Education Act monies, and thus local organizations and tribes are prohibited from receiving those funds. The Federal Adult Education Act by and large is not serving and cannot serve Indian adults.

Additionally, we are finding that states are claiming to serve large numbers of Indian students whom they in fact are not serving. Oklahoma is a case in point. Anyone who takes the GED test is counted as having been an adult education student in the State of Oklahoma whether or not they received even one iota of instruction or one penny of Federal Adult Education Act money was spent on them. There are literally thousands of Indian adults who are claimed by the State of Oklahoma as having been served when the state turns in its reports to ED.

Knowing the context in which Indian adults learn, we need to address Indians both on and off reservations. I would like to highlight that there is no difference between reservation and urban Indians in that Indian adults will only participate when they are in the Indian context. Being off the reservation does not change the needs of Indian adults.

- There is a very strong need to have models for Indian education and particularly for Indian adult education. The National Indian Adult Education Association has tried to help fill that void, but there needs to be a very formal process. Unfortunately, the program of validating models that ED currently runs is heavily statistical. We are capable of running such programs, but we will not subject Indian adult students to the processes necessary for validation. There need to be some changes within ED to recognize active, viable models in Indian adult education that do not rely on the statistical analyses that are intrusive and completely unamenable to Indian adult learners. We would like a dialogue to occur within ED to see that this does come about. This would probably be beneficial in other areas of Indian education as well.

There has been a tendency to rely on standardized tests for data on student achievement, and we have found that students, particularly older Indian adults, resent coming into a classroom and taking three to five hours of standardized tests before they are even allowed to get started on books. Even after they have been in the program, there is a real fear about testing. People in a number of programs have told me that when they do testing, students leave. Students won't even come into classes during testing periods.

One alternative that we use is a master skills checklist system. We have our own diagnostics, and we have master skills checklists that are scoped and sequenced from zero through the 12th grade level. Although we don't use grade levels, because grades are very inappropriate for adults, we use the same scope and sequence. As the student learns skills and the instructor watches that student successfully perform certain skills for several weeks, then the instructor signs and dates their skill sheet. This provides information on the amount of material that students have learned, and the time frame within which students are learning. This presents a much more accurate picture than anything we have seen done with standardized tests, and it's psychologically and culturally very amenable to the student population.

Problems with Adult Education Programs

- We run an adult basic education (ABE) program at the Navajo Community College on the Navajo reservation; however, the BIA will not let us take over their program. As a tribal college we feel that we have the expertise to run their program, but they have refused to give control of their ABE program to our agency. I see this as a duplication of effort. I also feel that the tribal college does a better job running such programs because we have the expertise in ABE programs.

- We have been told that there are adult education programs that we should connect with, but the closest one is 60 miles away. When it involves traveling over mountainous roads, especially in the wintertime, you will not find students commuting that distance to an adult education program.

- I have a concern about the lack of preparation of adult education and adult vocational students. We get many high school dropouts, but we do not have the funding necessary for them to develop their basic skills or to complete their high school education. On the

Hoopla reservation as many as 85 percent of our students are dropouts, and I know that this number is also high in the Pitt River and Karok tribes.

An Effective Adult Education Program

One model used in preschool programs and in adult education has been hiring indigenous Native language speaking paraprofessionals as teachers and allowing them to take courses as they teach. I've seen two studies done on this model for continuing education of adults at Mississippi Choctaw and at the Boston Indian Council. Through this model of continuing education, adults usually end up staying in their community serving as role models for other adults and children. Some of the people who have been the most effective have been middle-aged women who were simultaneously working with Head Start and taking courses part time. These people have had a great effect on the lives of children and other parents. They tend to retain their cultural sensitivity and become very effective people.

Funding Problems

The Federal Adult Education Act functions similarly to the old vocational education program wherein states submit state plans and receive dollars for state-administered programs. However, Indian people are often left out of these plans, and there is no set-aside in the Federal Adult Education Act for Indians. It is important that Indians be included in the state plans under this particular act. We also need accountability because the states are counting our people and receiving federal dollars for them under the Adult Education Act.

Although money for adult education is technically available through the BIA, tribes that were not able to get on the bandwagon in the very early years still have not had the opportunity to participate in adult education because monies that come out of the same pot, such as social services and roads, have taken up all of that money. A tribe cannot suddenly set aside some of those life-sustaining service needs to add adult education. Thus, the presence of the Bureau does not necessarily mean that a tribe's adult education needs are taken care of. At the same time, there is very strong agreement that, if there is support for adult literacy, then there must be some mechanism to see that every Indian adult has the opportunity to become literate and has the opportunity to participate in a culturally amenable and culturally accountable program.

I work with the BIA in adult vocational training (AVT). Over the years AVT has sustained major cuts, and for 1992 the Bureau is undergoing another million-dollar cut in vocational training. But with the high dropout rate in California--which is up to 70 percent on some reservations--we need funding for those students. There needs to be a bridge for dropouts because they can't go right into higher education programs. Students drop out of high school at 14, 15, or 16 years of age with nothing to do, so they eventually come over to the tribe. We have tribal contracts and they'll ask for training to get into school. They apply to either the Bureau or the tribe for scholarships, but funding is not available and we have a backlog of applications. In the Sacramento area office alone, there are applications for vocational training from at least 250 people who do not have

any funding. Vocational education is getting a lot bigger in California, but it seem like we're going backwards instead of forwards with the funding.

- In the BIA proposed budget, funding for AVT will be decreased by \$2 million by 1992. This really concerns me because we are trying to develop our human resources, our students, and yet we do not have the necessary monies. It was mentioned that approximately 250 applicants were on the waiting list. I alone, who contract for four tribes, have at least a hundred people whom I have not been able to fund under adult vocational training, and yet the funding is going to be cut by \$2 million by 1992.

Funding Recommendations

- For a number of years the National Indian Adult Education Association has advocated that there be a two percent set-aside from the Federal Adult Education Act and that the set-aside be administered as formula funding for Indian adult education both on and off the reservation. We know that there are many tribes that have never received a dime of adult education money.

II. Vocational Education

Recognizing the Need

- Approximately 65 to 70 percent of the jobs available do not require college education but do require technical training or craft skill in a trade.
- Many high schools are promoting college preparatory classes, and there are not many vocational classes for students preparing for the workforce. I think students should have a vocational option if that is what they want to do. Some students do not want to go to college. They are looking into some type of vocational training to prepare themselves for a position after they graduate.
- In the early 1970s, the Bureau educational programs were primarily vocational, and we subsequently made a major effort to get our youth into higher education. We have succeeded in increasing the academic orientation, but the question of whether we have a focus on academics or vocation is like the political pendulum that swings from conservative to moderate to liberal, then back to moderate, then conservative, and so on. This points out the need for an Indian community or tribe to realize that this is a very important question that needs to be addressed.

In Wisconsin, this is a serious question. Is the educational system going to meet the education desires of individual students? Knowing that there are going to be some students wanting to go into the trades, perhaps there should be a Y in the road so that at the junior high level they can follow either a vocational track or a higher education track. This question needs to be asked, and decisions need to be made by individual communities as they look at their unique needs--particularly by tribes that are aspiring to develop their

economies; develop businesses; staff their own governmental systems, social systems, and health systems, and so forth.

- We need to address both higher education and vocational levels, and we need to keep in mind individual students and their aspirations. We need to motivate students to aspire not to \$3.95 jobs but to jobs that will sustain them and their families in the year 2000.
- We have to be careful about applying national statistics to Indian country. I am referring to the comment that there are going to be fewer jobs that require a college education. When you look at tribal governments and their infrastructure, we are not a typical type of organization; we have a very sophisticated governmental structure. When the Navajo Community College first started, it had a policy of hiring outside people only for a certain period of time until some of their own people became trained in those technical or professional fields. What we are facing in Indian country is the need for highly technically trained people. We need professional people to manage our businesses and our tribal governments. Consequently, we need to encourage our students to seek either technical or professional positions that are required in tribal infrastructures.

The Federal Role in Indian Vocational Education

- There have been a number of changes in vocational technical education due to the passage of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Amendments of 1990. There will be some changes in how vocational education is provided by ED, with more emphasis on the local level as opposed to the state level. Under that act, there is a special Indian set-aside program available for federally recognized tribes. This is a competitive grant program that has funded approximately 40 projects per year in the last few years. There are also Bureau vocational education programs.
- NACIE does not review all vocational education proposals; that is done through a reading and screening process within the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The Council does review and make recommendations on proposals under Title V of the Indian Education Act. Because there are too many vocational education proposals for the Council to read, all proposals are read and scored through a field reader process, and the scores are standardized and ranked. We start at number one and continue down spending all of the money that has been appropriated. The Office of Indian Education will tell us something like, "We will be able to fund eight or ten projects in this particular category." The Council will then review the top 12 or 13 proposals and make recommendations. We ask for more than will be funded because sometimes Council members do not feel a proposal meets the criteria.

The Relationship Between Vocational Education and Economic Development

- Our tribe went through the process of strategic planning and looked at all of the different needs on the reservation. That is why the tribe has set up an academic institution, the Navajo Community College, and also a vocational/technical institution, the Crown Point Institute of Technology.

- Everyone wants to work and be able to earn a living, but we need a skilled workforce to develop businesses and manufacturing on the reservations. Education and training are necessary to develop a skilled workforce.
 - The problem with vocational education is similar to the chicken and the egg problem. There is no reason to become skilled and educated if there are no jobs to look forward to. On the other hand, areas are not going to attract industry unless there is a skilled labor force. Isn't there a connection between business and industry and education?
 - I think the real issue is that of aspiration. The presence of a factory off the reservation providing \$3.50-per-hour jobs (in my judgment a sweatshop condition) should not be viewed as an option for our youngsters on the reservation. This is something we have experienced on our reservations. We are able to bring onto the reservations such jobs as sewing and surging, a stitching process. Surging is a very simple, very low-technology production procedure--very boring. These kinds of jobs do not inspire or motivate young men to do anything, not to speak of finishing high school to get there. In fact, most positions in those two projects were taken over by women, both Indian and non-Indian. I think economic development and human resource development are two related processes--each one will enrich the other.
 - For seven years, the Passamaquoddy tribe has received a considerable amount of Carl Perkins Indian set-aside resources. Carl Perkins special set-aside resources for Indian country are intended to be used by tribes for community-based economic development and job placement. I think it's important that we keep that feature alive in the reauthorization of that particular legislation. I understand that the language written into the 1990 amendments would allow Carl Perkins Indian vocational educational resources to be used by tribes, tribal organizations, and tribally controlled community colleges for the purpose of economic development. I have also heard that economic development does not mean job creation, an interpretation that has caused some concern among those of us in the field. We are a very isolated, rural tribe, and we do not have an existing local economy that provides jobs for tribal members. We have to use vocational educational resources very masterfully, creatively, and aggressively to create an economy. That is our strategy for developing job placements.
- When the time comes for federal officials to write the rules and regulations for that particular amendment, I think they need to keep the language flexible so vocational education resources from Carl Perkins and/or AVT resources could be readily commingled with 638 BIA adult vocational training for the purpose of broadly based development on the community level. The rules and regulations of the various categorical funding programs should be written in such a way that they encourage those in the field to be creative with the use of those monies. We don't want to be constrained by rigid rules and regulations.
- On the Navajo Reservation we don't look at vocational education as being lower than a college education. As a matter of fact, we try to promote education in every respect. We, as Indian people, should not let our young people think that, just because there is an industry or a manufacturing company across the street, they have the option of dropping

out and qualifying for a job there. That is not a way to qualify for positions. When I recruit I look for people who have completed training programs and who have made a show for themselves. Even among for those who have been in the military we look for experience that they've had that would add to their career enhancement.

Labor Force Realities

- In regard to lowering the academic requirements in high schools, I think you have to take a look at the state mandates. In California, the new requirement is four years of English, and I would be skeptical about lowering those requirements considering the low Indian student test scores across the country. Statistics show that by the year 2000, the workforce will require functional levels of writing, reading, and computation skills that we do not currently have.
- With changing technology and higher skills required for employment, you need at least a two-year degree to be hired in a decent salaried position. So we are looking for our vocational students to get their degrees to enable them to be competitive in the labor market. The short-term training programs are out.
- I was going to comment on the placement requirements of vocational education grants. We look at the state need for employees, but realistically, when our students graduate from high school, they either go on to college to get their bachelor's or master's degree, or they are employed with the Indian Health Service (IHS), BIA, the tribe, or tribal contract programs. The state isn't hiring our graduates, and I don't know why. Something needs to be done about this. We are training people and educating people, and they are going back to the BIA, IHS tribal programs, or contracts that we have. Only in a few unique cases are they getting employed off the reservations. I did a job survey and placement in the three counties next to our reservation in the Highline (MT) area. In all of the state or county offices that I visited, and most businesses and banks, I never saw any visible minorities. I was told that they didn't have any open positions. But I'm always wondering how they advertise the positions, especially when I go in there and I see a new face in our local county office.

Vocational Instructors

- Many reservations have individuals who are skilled in a particular trade or vocation but are unable to teach in an institution that certifies individuals for that trade.
- Vocational instructors do not need a degree to become certified under the Arizona State Board of Education. As an alternative route to certification, instructors may go back to their former employers and get verification by letterhead correspondence that they have been working in that particular area for X number of years.

Local Vocational Education Efforts

- Under the one and one-quarter percent set-aside, we are required to look at job placements on both the local and the state level. What I did was look at the local job

market as well as the state and tied them together when I submitted my application. One of the things that we looked at was a nursing program because nursing is an area of need on the national, state, and local level. We received a commitment of support from the Indian Health Service as well as from nursing care programs or nursing facilities along the Highline area in Montana. We also received a commitment of support from local teachers because of the low percentage of Native American teachers. We have an early childhood development program, and we're hoping that the students will go in as teacher's aides or continue their education in elementary or secondary education. The other program we have is business accounting, and I got a commitment of support for the tribe from businesses along the Highline area because there is a need for accountants and people working in those areas.

- In our state's vocational education system, there is constant effort by the local districts to develop coursework that meets the needs of the local communities. Invariably, what occurs is a unique experience. A professional is needed and demanded for the position, and although the state may have the course under the care and instruction of a particular instructor already in the system, as often as not they will bring in a local experienced person to teach that course. Usually it's a person who will come in just to teach that one course for the semester and get paid a certain consulting fee. This system is flexible enough to bring in the experience that is recognized and valued. For example, a small school in northern Wisconsin took a woodworking course directly out to the Lac du Flambeau reservation. They purchased equipment, placed it in a tribal center, and offered a one and a half year course in woodworking to the people from the reservation. Several times they used carpenters from the tribe to do the teaching. The rapport between the president of that school and the surrounding community was excellent, and he constantly looked for ways to take that system out and serve the community.
- One tribe in our state has put together a proposal for a discretionary grant for a tribally owned business that works on testing air, water, and soil. Even though the tribe owned the company, their own community members could not compete for many of the technical jobs that existed because they were untrained. They fully intended to make their tribal enterprise a career opportunity for their community, so they have put together a discretionary proposal for vocational education monies.
- At Mesa Community College we teach vocational skills, especially to senior citizens. At a certain age, income is not as much as it normally would be, so we have established a program to teach senior citizens how to troubleshoot because calling in a plumber or an electrician on a weekend costs time and a half or double. So we teach our senior adults how to take time for simple troubleshooting in plumbing, electrical work, and other home repairs. We also teach safety for use of appliances and other things connected with the dangers of life as a homeowner.
- I am a graduate of the Albuquerque Indian School, where we used to have vocational training in electrical work, plumbing, masonry, and construction, as well as academic courses. During my senior year, I was fortunate to be in job training with a construction company doing electrical work. I was not able to come back for the afternoon classes because the work was beyond the city limits, so the school allowed me to perform the

regular eight-hour workday and go to school at night. I wonder what schools are doing for our Indian students now, and if the students are really prepared to go out and make a living after graduation. Some students may not have the finances to be able to continue school in colleges or universities, so I suggest we have a program similar to the one I went through to prepare our students to go out and face the world.

Inadequate Funding

- We need to be concerned with more than just the set-aside for Indians in the 1990 amendments because that is only a one and one-quarter percent set-aside. Over the last few years the set-aside has provided only \$10 million. What can be done with \$10 million to address all of the vocational education needs of Indian people? That will fund only 40 projects that must compete against each other. Furthermore, that is only for federally recognized tribes; urban Indians and non-recognized tribes have no provisions.
- Certainly, with the set-aside program, we do have a specific amount of money that is allotted to Indians. However, that set-aside provides for only 40 projects to serve all 500 of the federally recognized tribes in the country, including Alaska Native villages.
- There are not many vocational education programs on reservations or in isolated schools because there isn't money for developing those kinds of programs. Those schools are emphasizing the basic skills and classes needed to complete a high school education. Very few of them are able to offer vocational education programs.
- Vocational programs are very, very expensive to run. We don't have the equipment nor the money to buy the equipment. However, we do realize that vocational education is very much needed among the Indian people to teach the skills that will enable them to work. I'd like to know if anyone knows where we can get grants other than from the federal government. We have approached some of the local industries that are on or near the reservation, but they get asked for a lot of donations and are probably "donated out."

Other Funding Problems and Concerns

- The set-aside under the Vocational Education Act was put into place to address the problems of states and local programs not providing services to Indians. However, now sometimes when there is a set-aside program Indians are sent off to the set-aside, when under both the Vocational Education act and the Adult Education Act we as citizens of the United States have rights to those services.
- Tribes that are more progressive have a better understanding of how to acquire grants and set-asides because they have more educated people, particularly in Oklahoma, and we are concerned about the equity of the situation. Because it is such a strongly competitive program, a tribe that is able to hire a professional proposal writer would have a greater advantage and a better chance of receiving grants. It is very important that the resource and evaluation center be able to provide technical assistance under Title V not only to potential formula grantees but also to discretionary grantees, tribes, and Indian organizations so they can compete with the others.

- Tribes are required to provide a 60 percent placement under the one and one-quarter percent set-aside for the Carl Perkins Act, unlike other programs funded under this act. If there is going to be a placement requirement, why is it just for tribes? The requirement should apply to all programs.
 - We are an isolated tribe, as are most tribes in California, and it is hard for us to compete for Carl Perkins funds because of our small number. Furthermore, getting a commitment of job placement as required in that application is somewhat difficult because of the lack of jobs on the reservations and rancherias.
 - There is some concern among Indian vocational educators that the one and one-quarter percent set-aside might be eliminated. The Chief State School Officers and the state vocational directors are lobbying rather aggressively for the elimination of the special set-aside. Because all states have the established vocational technical institute systems that receive most of the Carl Perkins money, it is argued that we do not need the one and one-quarter percent set-aside.
- I believe that losing the set-aside would harm the efforts to meet needs in human resources development in Indian country, particularly among small, rural, isolated tribes. We need to have the one and one-quarter percent, if not an increased set-aside, to help the folks in the field develop culturally sensitive, community-based vocational programs. We do have needs that cannot be adequately met by the vocational education establishment.
- When the set-aside was first authorized, there was language indicating that the BIA would provide an equal match of funds, but this has never been done. Over the years, many tribal education departments and tribes have tried to get the Bureau to provide that match, yet each time the act was reauthorized, the language was included, but the money was not provided. I am wondering if this is going to happen again. If the language is going to be included in the act, then the Bureau should be responsible to provide that match for Indian tribes.

Funding Recommendations

- I suggest that set-aside monies be increased and freed from the competitive nature that makes one tribal entity play against another. Funding should be granted on a per capita basis. It is unfair to make one tribal group compete against another because that only divides Native Americans. Funding for both the Vocational Education Act and the Adult Education Act could be awarded on a per capita basis.
- Tribal governments have to take advantage of every financial resource available and consider federal, state, and tribal resources. The addition of private industry as a resource is very important because many industries, even small business employers, are very concerned about the lack of basic skills of the present workforce. Furthermore, tribes should not only be looking toward the BIA for vocational education and employee assistance, but should also be looking at the overall Carl Perkins Act. Tribes, in partnership with states and private industry, should look at ways and means by which vocational education can strengthen the basic workforce. If private industry is concerned

about the level of education and the skills of their potential employees, we have an increased opportunity of getting their assistance in developing these programs and perhaps receiving financial assistance as well.

- I think that future federal human resources funding, grants, and contract programs should require that tribes go through the process of assessing local labor market information, attitudes of tribal members toward needed skills, and preferences for jobs. This is important in order to have vocational education programs that are culturally sensitive to work preferences on the reservation, appropriate to work values that tribal members are accustomed to, and accommodating to the skills required.

III. Vocational Rehabilitation

Problems with Funding and Services

- I'm here to ask the Task Force to consider American Indian vocational rehabilitation projects and the demise of services for our American Indians with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is related to adult and vocational education because sometimes clients who go through vocational rehabilitation programs are sent to vocational schools for their training. I'm a resource specialist, and there are only 14 Indian projects that exist under ED's vocational rehabilitation grants, serving only 50 tribes. The funding sources for American Indian vocational rehabilitation programs are similar to those for vocational education, with a one quarter of one percent set-aside. There should be an effort to make more tribes aware that there is funding available. Also, hopefully the funding can be increased so that more tribes can receive funding. From what I understand, out of 30 applicants only 14 were funded. Furthermore, there is a need for technical assistance. It is too large a task for only two research and training centers to provide technical assistance to the existing projects.
- The State of Arizona was the first state to start working closely with the American Indians, and the Navajo tribe was the first tribe to have a rehabilitation program. Both my undergraduate degree and my masters degree are in rehabilitation, and I'm the first Indian ever to go through those programs. I became aware that services should have existed for our Indian people with disabilities but that states have not been providing those services.
- Federal law requires Native American vocational rehabilitation programs to operate in a manner comparable to state vocational rehabilitation programs. We are required to establish cooperative agreements between the tribes and the state; however, the states are automatically funded from year to year while we are required to compete for this funding. If we are to be comparable, we should not have to compete for this greatly needed funding year after year.
- Under the vocational rehabilitation program there is language calling for a set-aside for tribes, but, from what I understand, that set-aside is not available. Tribes have to

compete with everyone else when they submit their applications for vocational rehabilitation programs.

Recommendations

- Non-Indian people use supplemental security income payments (SSI) to work with state vocational rehabilitation. We can see from these people how resources were merged. If that can be done for non-Indians, it can be done for Indians as well.
- The Chippewa-Cree tribe from Rocky Boy Reservation operates the second project funded since 1985. We are requesting support for the reauthorization of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Act in 1991.
- Some of the directors of the current 14 programs formed a professional association that wants a resolution passed for more projects to be funded. The current set-aside is one quarter of one percent, and they would like that increased so that more tribes can apply. Right now the tribes are splitting up approximately \$3 million, with the Navajo tribe taking a big chunk of that because it is the biggest tribe.

The directors of the programs would be happy even with a set-aside of one percent. Because they are now organized as directors, they are in support of each other instead of being competitive and not wanting to share. They are now taking a stand to help each other and encourage other tribes to apply for funding.

IV. Other Concerns

Funding for Indian Education Programs

- We have been pleading year after year for money, but we know that available money is not growing--it's shrinking. However, our population on the reservation is growing, and so we do need more money. I think we need to double what is already on the books. Furthermore, funding needs to be spread as far and wide as possible. I think we should know if the funding is not spread out equally because we will have problems with Indians fighting each other. We need a formula so that we can be funded equally and cover all areas: North, South, East, and West. I'd also like to see the smaller tribes considered for funding because their need is just as great as that of big tribes.
- In some school districts supplemental services for Indian children are provided out of the Indian Education Act monies, and supplemental services for everybody else are provided out of Chapter 1. In that situation, federal dollars are supplanting other federal dollars. Indian children, because of their economic status, are often eligible for services from both of those programs, and they should not be pushed into only one or the other.
- To be eligible to apply for state funds in Montana, you must either be a local education agency (LEA) or an institution of higher education. A tribe doesn't fall into either category. I've written to Washington, DC, and to the state, and they each blame the other

for that specific regulation. I don't know who is responsible, but I think that regulation should be changed at the state level. When I was in Washington, DC, there wasn't anyone who could stand up and say that they received money from the state for their tribe. The only services available on reservations are those that are tribally controlled.

- There are some tribes such as the Navajo and the Hopi in which people are from the reservation but are going to public schools mainly because the families had to move into the cities due to the lack of jobs on the reservation. I wonder if there is any possibility of a head count so we could get funding from these tribes to help support their students who are going to public schools. We are not adjacent to any military post or any reservation and thus cannot draw any Johnson O'Malley funds. Perhaps we could take a head count of the students who are from the different tribes, and maybe the different tribes would like to help us in funding their students while they are in the public schools. The tribes should provide supplementary funds because public school funding is not adequate to cover the needs of our Indian students.
- I am very pleased to see that additional monies are being allocated for tribally controlled community colleges, but I am concerned about the tribes that are not located near community colleges. If our monies are now being redirected to those schools, where are we to get services?